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Female Entrepreneurship in Beekeeping: Innovation and Training as Vectors of Sustainable Development in the Sertão Pernambucano, Brazil

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Beekeeping has been consolidated as an important alternative for income generation, especially for women, as it requires low initial investment and promotes environmental conservation. However, small producers face challenges such as limited access to technology, poor technical assistance and devaluation of honey in the market. This study evaluated how technical training and innovation in beekeeping production can strengthen female entrepreneurship, add value to honey and boost the economic sustainability of beekeeping in the Sertão Pernambucano. The research was carried out with 20 women beekeepers from Fazenda Floresta, in the municipality of Parnamirim, central Sertão of Pernambuco - Brazil, a community in a situation of social vulnerability. A participatory and socio-educational approach was adopted to map the main challenges faced by beekeepers and, in a multidisciplinary way, implement strategic solutions. The actions included training on hive management for high productivity, beekeeping pasture, wax processing, hive shading and food safety, in addition to the implementation of a collective apiary with 40 hives and the introduction of honey bee jelly as a new market product. Female entrepreneurship and environmental education activities were also promoted with 47 children from the community. The results demonstrate significant advances considering that women have acquired technical knowledge and essential skills for the management of their beekeeping business; the price of honey produced increased from US$ 1,36/kg to US$ 6,80/kg, thanks to the added value and the strengthened visual identity; the commercialization of fractionated honey expanded access to new markets, such as farmers' markets and direct consumers; The involvement of the children ensured the continuity of environmental awareness and sustainable entrepreneurship. This project not only strengthened women's autonomy and leadership, but also contributed to a replicable model of inclusive rural businesses, promoting bioeconomy, food security, and economic resilience for smallholder beekeepers.